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A Challenging Bicentennial Program: American Issues Forum

The American Issues Forum is one of the more meaningful and challenging programs among the many developed to celebrate the 200th anniversary of our national existence. Developed by the National Endowment for the Humanities and co-sponsored by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, the American Issues Forum is a calendar of nine topics which can become the focus of discussion during the bicentennial academic year. The issues were selected by distinguished American scholars, and representatives of business, labor, and education, and are divided into 36 weekly subtopics which can be explored in a variety of ways and media.

The topics which the Forum proposes for discussion nation-wide are not current events or problems to be solved, but are timeless issues which affect our lives today, and have characterized American society for the past two centuries. Thus, the American Issues Forum will provide a framework for the exploration of American society—what it is, how it got that way, and where it is going. It will be an opportunity for Americans of all ages and persuasions to participate in a thoughtful observance of the Bicentennial.

The American Issues Forum is meaningful because it addresses itself to the many important social, ethical, economic and political issues that have conditioned our evolution as a people and as a nation. These issues are still vitally alive. Many, such as the ownership of the land, control of resources, the role of government in our lives, our individual freedoms, and use of leisure time, are crucial matters which should concern every American and particularly concern every Montanan.

The American Issues Forum is a challenging undertaking because it seeks to involve all members of our society in a national dialogue on the topics listed in the calendar (see right). It is particularly challenging
(Continued on Next Page)

AMERICAN ISSUES FORUM

FIRST MONTH: "A Nation of Nations" August 31-September 27, 1975

August 31: The Founding Peoples
September 7: Two Centuries of Immigrants
September 14: Out of Many, One
September 21: We Pledge Allegiance. . .

SECOND MONTH: The Land of Plenty September 28-October 25, 1975

September 28: A Shrinking Frontier?
October 5: The Sprawling City
October 12: Use and Abuse in the Land of Plenty
October 19: Who Owns the Land

THIRD MONTH: "Certain Unalienable Rights" October 26-November 22, 1975

October 26: Freedom of Speech, Assembly and Religion
November 2: Freedom of the Press
November 9: Freedom from Search and Seizure
November 16: Equal Protection Under the Law

FOURTH MONTH: "A More Perfect Union": The American Government November 23-December 20, 1975

November 23: "In Congress Assembled . . ." A Representative Legislature
November 30: A President: An Elected Executive
December 7: "The Government": The Growth of Bureaucracy
December 14: "By Consent of the States. . ."

FIFTH MONTH: Working in America January 11-February 7, 1976

January 11: The American Work Ethic
January 18: Organization of the Labor Force
January 25: The Welfare State: Providing a Livelihood
February 1: Enjoying the Fruits of Labor

SIXTH MONTH: "The Business of America. . ." February 8-March 6, 1976

February 8: Private Enterprise in the Marketplace
February 15: Empire Building: Cornering the Market
February 22: Subsidizing and Regulating: Controlling the Economy
February 29: Selling the Consumer

SEVENTH MONTH: America in the World March 7-April 3, 1976

March 7: The American "Dream" Among Nations
March 14: The Economic Dimension
March 21: A Power in the World
March 28: A Nation Among Nations

EIGHTH MONTH: Growing Up in America April 4-May 1, 1976

April 4: The American Family
April 11: Education for Work and for Life
April 18: "In God We Trust"
April 25: A Sense of Belonging

NINTH MONTH: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness May 2-May 29, 1976

May 2: The Rugged Individualist
May 9: The Dream of Success
May 16: The Pursuit of Pleasure
May 23: The Fruits of Wisdom

A CHALLENGING BICENTENNIAL

(Cont'd. From Page One)

because it calls for a commitment on the part of organizations, community leaders, churches and social groups to put aside their daily concerns as often as possible—hopefully once a week for 36 weeks—and to sit down and discuss the issues with each other from the perspective of their own community and their own experience. The success of the American Issues Forum program depends upon how many citizens are willing to do this.

Groups may wish to follow the entire schedule, or may select only those issues which interest them most.

In support of the national American Issues Forum, a regional AIF program, with headquarters at the University of Denver, will provide local program planners in the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, with valuable time-saving assistance in the form of information, advice, and discussion materials relating to the Forum Calendar.

Such help is available to schools, adult education and discussion groups; civic, professional, labor, farm, and business associations; colleges; churches; libraries; and media. They are being informed by national and local mailings, and many are already planning to examine all or some of the Forum's issues in programs of their own.

If you are interested in planning an American Issues Forum Bicentennial program, write to Dr. Leo B. Lott, Department of Political Science, University of Montana, Missoula,

Montana 59801 for a short, free *Program Ideas Memo*, giving a number of suggestions for your institution or group.

Many resources have been prepared for those interested in arranging discussion programs of Forum topics. Among these are a full text of the Forum Calendar, a Leadership Packet, Program Ideas, and annotated bibliographies prepared by the American Library Association for both adult and youth groups.

To aid in bringing the American Issues Forum into high school classrooms, the Regional Program is creating special school materials relating to the Forum Calendar. These will be particularly helpful in Social Studies classes, but will also be useful to teachers of other subjects and in junior high schools.

The school materials will include selected readings sufficient for a one-day class session on each of the Calendar's 36 weekly topics, along with imaginative suggestions for their use, and for more extensive treatments of the topics.

A parallel set of 36 short (10 to 15 minutes) "discussion-starter" oral tapes is being prepared by the Regional American Issues Forum Program, based at the University of Denver. Copies will be sent without charge to those furnishing blank tapes and return postage. Master copies of an adult version of the school materials, which will include suggestions for their use by adult discussion groups, will also be available for organizations which wish to duplicate (from print—camera-ready) copies for their members. The

Regional Program is also working with a number of area television and radio stations in preparing broadcasts on Forum topics.

National media efforts are under way as well; including National Public Radio programs, and a "Course-By-Newspaper" project, which will furnish newspapers with a series of 36 essays on Forum topics, written by 10 of the nation's outstanding scholars. The course will be carried by the *Missoulian*, the *Great Falls Tribune*, the *Bozeman Chronicle* and the *Helena Independent Record*. College credit for the course by newspaper is presently available through Carroll College, the College of Great Falls and the University of Montana. Other Montana colleges may also offer credit.

Clearly, most of the Forum topics relate easily to the Montana Committee for the Humanities theme of "Private Rights and Public Choices," and affords the opportunity to explore contemporary public issues from the perspective of the liberal arts. The Committee wishes particularly to encourage project proposals which relate to the topics of the American Issues Forum.

Arthur Miller has written that "a great debate is a nation talking to itself." The American Issues Forum provides the groundwork for just such a debate. Responses to the AIF concept so far received indicate that America is ready and willing to talk to itself.

—Leo B. Lott, Ph.D., Prof.
of Political Science at the
University of Montana, and
State Director for Regional
Issues Forum



Montana State Librarian Alma S. Jacobs examines part of the MCH gift to the State Library.

MCH Donates Audio-Visual Material to State Library

The Montana Committee for the Humanities recently donated the audio-visual materials from the first three years of its program to the Montana State Library in Helena.

The collection includes 16mm films, videotapes, cassettes, and reel-to-reel tapes from MCH-funded projects on topics such as land use, insanity and the law, Montana coal and energy development, prison reform, Indian employment, Montana's political history, political power and the poor, higher education, religion and politics, political power in state government, and more. Also included are materials from three MCH State Conferences on "Political Power and Human Values," "The Dilemma of Power and Morality," and "Images of Humanity in a Changing World," and from two literature festivals, "Solitude and Community" and "Cultural Colonialism."

Commenting on the collection, Montana State Librarian Alma S. Jacobs said, "While the quality of the content of these audio-visual materials is uneven, the Library, the Committee and the National Endowment for the Humanities recognize that the views and opinions documented in this collection may be of interest to future historians and other researchers who seek information about Montanans' attitudes towards specific public issues facing the state in the nineteen seventies." Both the Committee and the Endowment have expressed the hope that donating this collection to the Montana State Library will help to insure that the materials will be accessible to all citizens who have an interest in them.

Persons wishing to borrow selected tapes or films may direct their requests to their local libraries or to the State Library, 930 E. Lyndale Avenue, Helena. A complete list of the materials may be obtained by writing the MCH office, 322 Turner Hall, University of Montana, Missoula.

Lewistown Forum

"Lewistown has no *right* to exist," said Professor Richard McConnen at Lewistown's Yogo Inn where panelists and the general public met on May 15 to discuss the question "Does Lewistown Have a Future?" However, he hastened to add that Lewistown ought to exist as long as it can serve the needs of Fergus County farmers and ranchers. The panel discussion was one of a series of MCH-sponsored public forums on "Federalism: The American Experience." Professor McConnen, Chairman of the Economics and Agricultural Economics Department at Montana State University, was joined on the panel by Reverend George Barnhart, Lewistown Presbyterian minister, Ken Byerly, owner-publisher of the *Lewistown News-Argus*, and Howard Schwartz, Instructor in Political Science at the University of Montana. Brad Parrish, Lewistown attorney and member of the MCH, acted as moderator.

Professor McConnen said that no town has an inherent right to exist and that the survival of Lewistown, like all other towns, depends upon how well it serves the needs—economic, social, cultural, and whatever—of the members of its community.

All present agreed that Lewistown's community included the ranchers and farmers of Fergus County, as well as the residents of the town itself. Lewistown provides essential goods and services and is a social and cultural center for the ranchers and farmers, and owes its economic existence primarily to the local agricultural industries. But beyond this obvious interdependence, it became clear during the course of the discussion that Lewistown and Fergus County residents have many other things in common. In varying degrees both groups have experienced the problems of increased mobility, lack of neighborliness, privatization of experience, a widespread mechanistic-economic attitude toward living, and an absence of participatory political institutions.

Reverend Barnhart focused his remarks on the rootlessness which results from excessive mobility. For the past three centuries Americans have acted on the belief that serious difficulties encountered in a community are best overcome by physically moving—either to a new frontier or to another community more compatible with their needs. They hope to be able to live as they please by moving to *where* they please, he observed. Reverend Barnhart stressed that this, however, leaves untapped and undeveloped their talents to change any com-

munity in which they live. Extreme mobility may be symptomatic of an inability or unwillingness to act in concert with others through political and social channels. In moving, politics and social action, relatives and friends, and the physical places of origin are left behind. Lost, therefore, is much of the spiritual dimension of being human.

Rootlessness is central to the disintegration of Americans' sense of community. Reverend Barnhart reminded the audience that there was a time when "neighbor" was a verb. One "neighbored," i.e., helped and supported other members of one's community on a regular basis. This "neighboring," he finds, has been on the wane in small towns where once it was very common. A member of the audience noted that the same is true in ranching today. Ranchers help one another brand cattle, but that is one of the few kinds of "neighboring" left, he said.

Rootlessness, said Reverend Barnhart, is also connected to the phenomenon of the privatization of experience in small towns. Choosing to tend almost exclusively to their private affairs, people are becoming psychologically and spiritually isolated from one another. They cannot and do not enter fully into community life, and, as a result, the community suffers. Although, as Ken Byerly noted, the massive communal effort to build the Yogo Inn after fires destroyed Lewistown's two large hotels was a fine example of people acting together for the community as a whole, he and others present agreed that this occurs only in crisis situations and not in the daily political and social life of the town. And according to two Fergus County rancher-farmers who attended the meeting, privatization accounts for the reluctance of agricultural people to organize and demand reforms as a group. Ranchers and farmers prefer to work things out individually, even when their problems are ones which

could be better solved by group action.

Reverend Barnhart also pointed to the existence of a widespread attitude that one's way of life should be judged mechanistically and in economic terms. It is not enough that a town exists to serve a certain economic function—in Lewistown's case, as a trade center for the local ranching-farming industry. The academic humanist on the panel, Howard Schwartz, agreed that there ought to be something distinctive and spiritually enriching about a small town, which should make its people happy and proud to live here. Small town residents, he said, are a minority in America and should, like other minorities, take seriously their culture and special traditions not as quaint pieces of nostalgia but as meaningful forces in their present and future lives. Small town culture must be attended to, examined and re-examined, and consciously developed along lines determined by townspeople.

Ranching and farming, too, can be a spiritually enriching way of life and should not be reduced to simply a frantic response to ever increasing demands for greater production. Professor McConnen expressed concern over the introduction of four-wheel drive tractors, which greatly increase the standard size of an economically viable farm unit, forcing some families off the land as others buy them out in order to expand, and encouraging corporate farming which, until recently, Professor McConnen had not thought economically feasible in Montana.

Ken Byerly noted that 60 years ago there were more than 6,000 farms and ranches in Fergus, Judith Basin, and Petroleum Counties; now there are only 1,048. He contended, however, that individual farmers and ranchers are better off than they were 60 years ago, when homesteading allotments were only 160 or 320 acres—too small

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Upcoming Events in the Montana Public Program in the Humanities

July 26-

August 2 Selected MCH-sponsored films at State Fair, Great Falls.

August

15-16

"Montana Journalism and Politics Since World War II" at the Montana Press Association convention.

18-19

"The Native American and Public Education" Forum, Rocky Boy Indian Reservation.

September

9-10

"Focus on Women" workshop, Broadus.

25-26

"Focus on Women" workshop, Lewistown.

October

9-10

"Focus on Women" workshop, Conrad.

an area to support a family adequately in central Montana. He stressed that the future of Lewistown looks better now than it ever has. Saying, "Moderation is the key," he praised Lewistown's leaders, and described the growth of the convention and tourist businesses, medical facilities, the increasing population of retired people, and the two new colleges in Lewistown—the Montana Institute of the Bible and the Resident Extension Service of the College of Great Falls. He noted that Lewistown residents had banded together to help themselves, and praised the community cooperation during the spring flooding.

Howard Schwartz contended that the lack of participatory political institutions on the local level presents a serious problem for small communities in at least two areas—economic self-determination and human rights.

Since the Depression, he said, there has been a national economy. Economic decisions are made by the federal government or by multinational or international conglomerates. Deciding policy, economic or otherwise, is, however, a distinguishing characteristic of a living community. When major public policies are determined and decided for rather than by a community, local

identity and loyalty are undermined. As difficult as it might be, he argued, local communities must begin to exercise some economic self-determination through strong political institutions at the local level. He reminded those present of the efficacy of the town meeting form of government in the New Hampshire town which resisted Aristotle Onassis' plan to build an oil refinery nearby.

Schwartz further contended that some small towns have been unwilling or unable to deal with problems in the area of human rights. For example, he said, a town ought to deal humanely with its poor, rather than implicitly or explicitly encouraging them to leave and transfer the problem elsewhere, as has happened in the South. A town must also be willing to respond to the needs of racial and ethnic minorities, women, youth, the elderly, and others, else they will go elsewhere they can expect a response. He suggested that equal political participation by all in local democratic institutions would help make small towns more responsive to these special groups since the entire citizenry would be directly involved in policy making.

In both cases, he concluded,—that of economic self-determination and that of preserving human rights—Montana's mandatory Review of Local Government makes changes in

new directions more possible than ever before.

The members of the steering committee for the Lewistown forum are: Barb Geiss, teacher and housewife; Ed Butcher, rancher and part-time professor, College of Great Falls Resident Extension Course; Jean McCalpin, Director, Lewistown Council for the Aging; and Ken Norr, Professor, College of Great Falls Resident Extension Service. Other forums in this series took place in Missoula, Glendive, Havre, Kalispell, and Polson. The project director of "Federalism: The American Experience" is Professor Louis Hayes, Chairman, Department of Political Science, University of Montana.

Panel at the Montana Press Association Meeting

An MCH-sponsored panel discussion on "Montana Journalism and Politics Since World War II" will be part of the 90th annual convention of the Montana Press Association at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls on August 15-16.

Project director Sam Gilluly, Secretary-Manager of the Montana Press Association, expects that among the issues to be raised will be
(Continued on Next Page)



"Recession and Rural Cultures" Conference at Havre, Feb. 22-23 1975

(l. to r.) standing: Prof. T. Power, Economics, University of Montana; Prof. R. Vanderpool, Political Science, Northern Montana College; Prof. B. Thackeray, Humanities, Northern Montana College; B. Morning Gun, Dir., Montana AIM; C. B. Anderson, Dir., Manpower for Urban Indians; W. Matte, Dir., Highline Indian Alliance; and G. Hemming (Project Director), Hill County Community Action Program.
seated: P. DeWolfe, former State Senator; M. Lucas, State Indian Affairs Coordinator; V. Bellecourt, AIM; and Floyd Westerman, folksinger.

PANEL AT PRESS MEETING (Cont'd.)

the self-censorship of news media, the public's right-to-know and its right of privacy, changes in political directions of the major political parties and officeholders, and the impact of technological advances in printing on the dissemination of news.

The panelists will be: Don Anderson, former president of Lee Newspapers of Montana; Professor Warren Brier, Dean of the School of Journalism, University of Montana; K. A. Eggensperger, publisher of the *Sanders County Ledger*, Thompson Falls; Leif Erickson, Helena attorney; and William MacKay, former State Senator and present Republican National Committeeman from Montana. The panel will be moderated by Professor Richard Roeder, Department of History, Government, and Philosophy, Montana State University.

The panel will be open to the general public, and tapes of the discussion will be available on loan to interested citizens. Contact the Committee office for further information.

Summer Humanist Stipends Awarded

The MCH designed a Summer Humanist in Residence program to encourage scholars to spend two months of the summer exploring ways and means of relating their academic disciplines to specific issues of public policy. The National Endowment for the Humanities views this program as a useful experiment in attempting to increase the pool of resource people in the humanities who are willing and able to participate in public programs funded by the MCH. As part of the Summer Humanist in Residence program the Committee has awarded five stipends to Montana teachers in the humanities for summer research and writing in areas related to the MCH theme "Private Rights and Public Choices." Stipend recipients are: Professor Terry L. Anderson, Department of Economics, Montana State University; Professor Albert Borgmann, Department of Philosophy, University of Montana; Marion Foley Dakin, Martin City; Professor Richard Roeder, Department of History, Government, and Philosophy, Montana State University; and Professor Joseph Ward, Department of English and Humanities, Carroll College.

In addition, the MCH has awarded two stipends to teachers in the

humanities who will evaluate the formats and impacts of MCH-funded projects. These stipend recipients are: Professor Larry K. Hannah, Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts, Eastern Montana College, and Professor Richard Vandiver, Department of Sociology, University of Montana.

Professor Anderson will research the development of the concept of "public interest" and the impact of that concept on the ownership and use of resources.

Professor Borgmann will pursue research in the philosophy of technology, with emphasis on both scientific and humanistic forms of explanation.

Marion Foley Dakin will study various types of utility ownership and management, and explore the philosophical questions and implications of private and of public control over utilities.

Professor Roeder will research Montana's political history since World War II, focusing on public policy decisions in the areas of taxation, use of state lands, environmental conflicts, and governmental reform. Since those policy decisions were directly influenced by the quality of information available to the public, he will also undertake a study of the recent history of journalism in Montana.

Professor Ward will examine questions of individual and private rights and public choices affecting Native Americans and prisoners in Montana.

Professor Hannah will explore and describe possible formats for MCH-sponsored programs, and methodologies for evaluating those programs.

Professor Vandiver will carry out an evaluative survey of the impact of MCH-funded projects on Montana communities with special emphasis on whether and to what extent these programs have had a humanistic impact.

The Summer Humanists in Residence will prepare papers on their research topics illustrating some of the ways in which the perspectives of the liberal arts can be used to explore and illuminate specific public policy issues in Montana. These papers will be available in September both to citizens interested in sponsoring public programs in the humanities and to persons interested in the general question of how the humanities are relevant to public policy.

In addition, each Summer Humanist will participate in at least two MCH-sponsored projects during the coming year and will be available to groups requesting advice when designing a project.

MCH Receives Additional \$20,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities

The Montana Committee for the Humanities has received word from Dr. Ronald Berman, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, of the granting of an additional \$20,000 for the current grant year, bringing this year's total MCH grant from the Endowment to \$295,000.

Since October 1, 1974, the Committee has awarded regrants totaling \$207,420.76 to 36 Montana groups for programs on such topics as land use, mental health, education for minorities, human rights, aging, local government review, politics of the family, resource use, science and technology, accountability in public services, recession and rural cultures, and more. The additional \$20,000 is available for projects which will take place between now and October 1, 1975.

The Committee encourages applications from any non-profit organization or ad hoc group interested in organizing a public program. Potential projects must be related to the theme "Private Rights and Public Choices," involve teachers in the liberal arts in the planning and implementation, focus on a public policy issue, provide for a balanced exchange of views, and be directed to the out-of-school public. In addition, applicants must be able to provide in-kind service and/or donated cash equalling the amount requested from the MCH. For application forms and more information, contact the MCH office, 322 Turner Hall, Missoula, or phone 243-6022.

New Grant Awards

In the last five months the Montana Committee for the Humanities funded the following projects:

Federalism: The American Experience, sponsored by the Bureau of Government Research. Funded for \$6,513.

Cheyenne Family Seminar, sponsored by the Cheyenne Family Workshop Committee. \$2,340.

The Native American and Public Education, sponsored by the Advocates for Indian Education. \$2,038.

Is Downtown Bozeman Worth Saving?, sponsored by the Fred Willson Architectural Society. \$3,240.

Behind the Broken Words, sponsored by the Montana Committee for the Humanities. (Continued on Next Page)

NEW GRANT AWARDS

(Continued From Page Five)

sored by the Missoula Festival of the Arts. \$2,500.

Horizon '76, sponsored by the Institute for Cultural Affairs. \$4,000.

A Sense of Place, sponsored by the Committee to Present the Missoula Literature Conference. \$5,194.

Canada: Neighbors to the North, sponsored by Northern Montana College. \$5,800.

Images of Historical Montana, sponsored by the Committee for Preservation of Montana's Photographic Heritage. \$4,150.

Fort Union Basin Coal Symposium, sponsored by Northern Montana College. \$2,000.

Historical Roots and Montana Dilemmas Today, sponsored by the

Ad Hoc Committee to Study Property Rights. \$1,684.

The Politics of Home and Family, sponsored by the Ad Hoc Committee on Politics and the Family. \$2,580.

Montana Journalism and Politics Since World War II, sponsored by the Montana Press Association. \$535.

History of the Flathead Valley, sponsored by the Total Community Education Program at Flathead Valley Community College. \$13,066.54.

Accountability—The People's Right to Know, sponsored by Montana Association of Social Workers, et al. \$4,744.

The People's Mobil University, sponsored by the Hill County Community Action Agency, the Hi-Line Indian Alliance, and the *Hi-Line Herald*. \$7,500.

Human Sexuality: An Age of Choice, sponsored by the Psychology Department of the College of Great Falls. \$4,150.

Beyond Bricks and Mortar, sponsored by the Social Concerns Task Force of the Missoula Ministerial Association, the League of Women Voters, and the Montana Association of Churches Task Force on Government and Institutions. \$17,331.

Onward, sponsored by Black Studies and Meta Films, Inc. \$2,414.

Outreach Workshops, sponsored by the Ad Hoc Committee to Focus on Women. \$6,272.

Public Choices and Private Rights as Reflected in Broadcasting, sponsored by the Montana Broadcasters Association. \$2,500.

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